

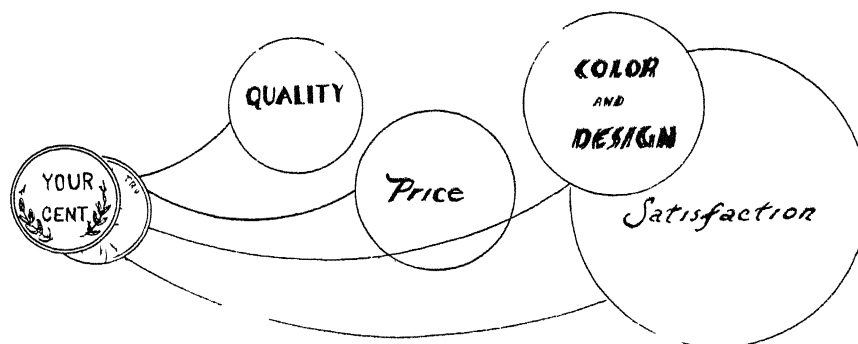
BUYING CARPETS AND RUGS

By Bernice J. Tharp*

I. BE A GOOD SHOPPER

1. *Study Your Basic Needs*—Consider the room for which the carpet or rug is needed, the grade of carpet or rug needed to stand the wear it will get, the price you can afford to pay, and the color or colors that fit into your room's scheme

2. *Be Informed*—Find out as much as you can about carpets and rugs. Feel free to consult the Better Business Bureau or the Chamber of Commerce for



Make every penny count in buying carpets and rugs

information about: Reliability of the dealer and his fair business methods; contracts for budget plan of payments; and the rate of interest or service charge that may be required.

3. *Shop Around*.—Take color samples of your furnishings with you. Compare prices and grades of carpets and rugs in the best, medium, and lower priced stores. Read the labels for grades, fiber content, construction, strength and durability test record, and recommended care. Feel the carpet for firmness of weave, pliability of the back, and springiness of the pile. Ask the dealer if the carpet or rug is of first or second quality.

4. *Weigh the Value*.—Select the carpet or rug that will most nearly meet your needs at the price you can afford to pay.

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II. EXAMINE THE WEARING QUALITY

1. *Weaves*.—The names—Axminster, Wilton, Velvet, Tapestry Brussels, and Body Brussels—refer to the way the carpet or rug is woven. Weaves wear equally well if the same amount and grade of wool are used on the surface, and if the back is equally well woven.

Axminster is identified by the crosswise ridges or rows on the back. This kind of carpet can be rolled lengthwise, but not crosswise. It is durable, moderate in price, and has an unlimited range of colors. High grade Axminster has 8 or more rows per inch; medium grade has from 6 to $7\frac{2}{3}$ rows per inch; and low grade has from $3\frac{1}{2}$ to $5\frac{2}{3}$ rows per inch.

Velvet carpet may have cut or uncut pile. It may or may not have a design. In the better grades of designed velvet carpet, the design is printed on the yarn before weaving. In lower grades, it is printed after weaving. An uncut velvet carpet may be called a Tapestry Brussels.

Wilton and Body Brussels carpets are woven on the same type of loom. When certain colors are not being used on the design on the surface, the yarns are buried in the body of the carpet. This makes it strong, durable, and resilient. The Wilton has a cut pile, the Body Brussels, uncut.

Worsted Wilton has a pile of the finest, long combed wool. This makes possible sharp, intricate, and delicate designs. This weave gives exceptionally long wear and sheds dust readily.

Wool Wilton has a pile of coarser, shorter fibers which makes a more bulky yarn than that in a Worsted carpet. The wool Wilton is sturdy and will stand heavy traffic. In Modern Wiltons, both cut and uncut pile may be found in the same carpet.

A real Oriental rug may be recognized by the hand tied knots at the base of the pile, and by the fact that the tufts cannot be pulled out. American manufacturers use Oriental designs in Wilton, Axminster, and Velvet weaves. Cotton or Rayon rugs in which Oriental designs are used are not true Orientals, but they are often sold from door to door by salesmen at prices comparable to real Oriental rugs.

2. *Pile*.—These may be 2-ply, 3-ply, or 4-ply yarns. The ply does not affect the grade of the carpet so much as do the height of the pile and the closeness of the weave. Twist pile refers to a pile of tightly twisted yarns which may have plies of one or more colors. The twist yarn when woven gives the pile a pebbly appearance which shows footsteps and soil less readily than does a plain cut pile.

The density or compactness of the pile is the chief factor in wearing quality. The manufacturers follow a standard for the amount and kind of wool to be used in the surface of each grade of carpet or rug. The more springy, strong wool used, the better the carpet will wear. The closer the pile, the better it will wear, but short, thick pile wears better than does long, thin pile.

3. *Fibers and Yarns*.—Carpet wool is a carefully blended variety of strong imported wool.

Other fibers, such as nylon, are used in some carpets. Nylon makes a strong yarn. When nylon is used, it usually is in the pile of carpets. Cotton, rayon, and jute may be used in the pile of lower grade carpets. Cotton and rayon pile have

a tendency to pack down. The amount of crush depends on the blend of fibers. Jute pile is likely to break and bend. Cotton and jute are usually used in the back of carpets and rugs. Specially prepared paper fiber is sometimes used in the back and has been found to give relatively good service.

4. *Other Points About Carpets.*—Patent back rugs or carpets have a plastic binder applied to the back to hold the pile firmly in place and to prevent raveling when the carpet is cut. Some carpets are made using a rubber backing to hold the pile in place.

Rug pads, cushions, or underlays have been found to practically double the life of a carpet or rug. They help to reduce noise, protect the carpet from wear, and make the floor warmer. A few carpets are made having a deep rubber cushion back, so that no additional pad may be necessary.

III. CARPET AND RUG SIZES

Carpet may be purchased by the yard in widths varying from 27 inches to 30 feet in width. Carpet of the heavier grade, 27 inches wide, is usually intended for stair carpet. An extra length for tread and riser should be purchased to allow for shifting of wear from the tread to the riser, or from riser to tread. Ask your dealer about this extra length.

Broadloom refers to carpet woven on a broad loom. It comes in standard widths of 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, and 18 feet. Special orders may be made for the 24- or 30-foot widths.

Standard rug sizes are: 27 x 54 inches, 36 x 63 inches, 4½ x 6½ feet, 6 x 9 feet, 7¼ x 9 feet, 8¼ x 10¼ feet, 9 x 12 feet, and 11¼ x 15 feet.

IV. EXAMINE FOR GRADE AND PRICE

Push your fingers down into the pile (see Pile, Section II, item 2); if the pile is dense, it will be hard to feel the foundation threads. The yarns of a wool carpet should feel smooth and soft, but springy. Another indication of a good grade of carpet is a high number of tufts per square inch. Where possible, look on the back and count the number of tufts per square inch. Mail-order firms often describe the grade of a carpet by the number of tufts per square foot. If this is done, find the number per square inch by dividing the total by 144.

V. CARPET AND RUG GRADES

Weave	Approximate number of tufts per sq. inch		
	High	Medium	Low
Axminster	56—up	42 to 49	28 to 35
Velvet	80—up	63	42
Wilton	123—up	90	60
Tapestry	100—up	63	30 to 48
Chenile	140—up	72	49 to 60
Oriental	200—up	100	to as few as 9
Antique Oriental rugs have as high as 30,000 tufts.			

VI. BE SATISFIED WITH YOUR COLOR AND DESIGN SCHEME

Since floor coverings are purchased only once or twice in a lifetime, plan carefully, not only for your present needs, but also for future needs. Probably you will make frequent changes in wall treatments and furnishings, because your needs and styles change.

In planning your color and design scheme, you will have three parts of the room to consider: The floor, the walls, and the furnishings. Your room will look better if only one of these has a prominent pattern and the other two are plain, or have an inconspicuous pattern. Decide where you want the most pattern.

If the floor covering is of a plain color, that becomes one of the major colors of the room scheme. Then it is desirable to repeat this color in other ways on all sides of the room. If you choose a floor covering that has a prominent pattern, it is desirable that the colors in it repeat those on the walls, and in the other furnishings. That gives a feeling of harmony in the room.

Plain walls and floors, or those with indistinct pattern, make the room appear larger, and give greater opportunity for the use of pattern in the furnishings.

Light colors in floor coverings give a feeling of space. Some light colors tend to show soil and may require frequent cleaning. Dark colors give richness to the scheme, but show lint and footsteps. Neutral and medium colors show soil the least.

Select the color and design that your family will not tire of and will enjoy for years. In making your choice of a floor covering, you may have to compromise. Only you and your family can decide which is most important for your own satisfaction, color and design, price or durability.